

# Ercall Wood Technology College

Golf Links Lane, Wellington, Telford, TF1 2DT

**Inspection dates** 24–25 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Students are not making rapid enough progress from their low starting points, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Although much teaching is good or outstanding, there remains some inconsistency. Recent improvements have not yet become evident in students' rates of progress.
- Teachers do not always plan lessons that allow students, particularly the more able, to work independently towards the highest grades.
- Not all teachers keep up a brisk pace in lessons: they do not ask sufficiently searching questions or involve students in activities as soon as possible.
- A minority of teachers do not always match work to the needs of different groups of students.
- Students are not consistently given the opportunity to respond to teachers' marking in their books.

### The school has the following strengths

- Under the headteacher's strong leadership there has been a trend of steadily improving standards over time. He is well supported by leaders throughout the school, many of whom are new, and by the governing body. They have been successful in improving the quality of teaching and have eradicated inadequate teaching.
- Students who follow alternative, work-related courses achieve particularly well.
- Almost all students, when they leave the school, go on to further education, training or employment.
- Behaviour is good and students show pride in their school and in their achievements. They say they feel safe and that they get on very well together.
- Many students take part in exciting projects and events that broaden their horizons, such as the Boeing 'Build a plane' project and the successful and innovative entries for the National Enterprise Challenge.
- The school's strong commitment to the spiritual, moral, social and spiritual aspects of students' education has created a tolerant and harmonious community.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons, of which six were jointly observed with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher or an assistant headteacher. In addition, the inspection team looked at students' work in their books and listened to them read.
- There were meetings with groups of students, senior leaders, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 24 responses to the online questionnaire Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 24 responses to a staff questionnaire.
- The inspection team examined the school's own data on students' recent and current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; records relating to behaviour and attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Richard Boswell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Keith Brown

Additional Inspector

Rosemary Myers

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Ercall Wood Technology College is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The majority of students come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average.
- The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is broadly average.
- The percentage of students who are supported through the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for students in local authority care and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled students and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of students supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A small number of students in Year 10 and Year 11 attend work-related courses, principally at two local colleges, Telford College of Arts and Technology and New College, Telford. The school also runs a breakfast club.
- The school receives the support of a local leader of education from Hadley Learning Community in Telford.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for students' attainment and progress.
- A completely new building project for the whole school is currently under construction on the school site.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement through sharing existing outstanding practice so that all teaching is consistently good or better by making sure all teachers:
  - plan lessons that allow students, particularly the more able, to use independent skills to make accelerated progress and achieve the highest grades
  - match work to the needs of different groups of students with activities that are at the right level of difficulty to support and challenge their learning
  - give a brisk pace to their lessons swiftly involving students in activities
  - ask searching questions of all students to extend their thinking, prompt them to talk about their learning and boost their confidence in their abilities
  - give students the opportunity to respond to marking in their books and to show they are clear about how they can improve.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils **requires improvement**

- While there has been a trend over time of improving standards in the percentage of students achieving a good pass at GCSE, standards in English and mathematics are below the national average.
- The proportion of students making the expected rate of progress in mathematics is close to average and is just below average in English. There has been an upward trend in this proportion in mathematics over the past three years and in English this has improved in the last school year.
- Students join the school with skills, understanding and knowledge that are significantly below average and are decreasing each year. There has also been a decrease, year on year, in the reading ability of students coming into Year 7. For example, nearly two-thirds of the current Year 7 have the reading age of a nine year-old on entry to the school.
- There is some variation, from year to year and from subject to subject, in the proportion of students making good progress at Key Stage 3, with the exception of science where progress is good and has improved over time. Achievement in science at Key Stage 4 has been broadly in line with or above the national average for the past three years.
- The school's own records show that students currently in Year 11 are making good progress in English and mathematics compared to the same period last year and that they are on track to meet challenging targets.
- Students from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are making at least as good progress as their classmates in all subjects and in all year groups. This is because the school makes sure that these groups of students are given the right support and offered appropriate challenges to raise their achievement.
- The average GCSE grade achieved by more-able students in both 2012 and 2013 was a B and, apart from art and religious education, fewer of the more-able students are achieving the top grades at GCSE than do so nationally. This is because they do not always get the opportunity to practise developing their skills in independent work.
- In 2013 these students supported by the pupil premium were 16 months behind their peers in English and 12 months behind in mathematics. However the gap in students' attainment and in their progress in both subjects is narrowing for all ability levels. Pupil-premium funding is used appropriately to finance, for example, a programme to help students make the move from primary school and a full time member of staff to support and improve attendance. These actions have contributed to the closing of the gap in eligible students' attainment with the others.
- The Year 7 catch-up premium has been used to finance, for example, interactive software that encourages students to develop their reading skills and the training of staff in a nationally recognised programme for the learning of letters and sounds.
- The small number of students in Year 10 and Year 11 who follow alternative, work-related courses both on and off the school site are achieving particularly well. In 2013 there was a 100% pass rate in the majority of these courses. Students who attend provision off site are

carefully monitored for their attendance and all safeguarding requirements are rigorously checked.

- The majority of disabled students and those who have special educational needs are making good progress in all years, given their starting points. This is because their education and welfare at the school is delivered by a well-qualified and well-led team who identify needs early and offer the right kind of support.
- The school does not enter students for examinations earlier than is usual unless it is for particular modules that provide examination practice and can be taken again with the best of the two results counting towards an overall grade. This in no way limits the potential of more-able students to achieve the highest grades

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- There have been some significant improvements in teaching over time but these have yet to be demonstrated in rapid progress for all students, particularly in English and mathematics. There is still some inconsistency in teaching across subjects and year groups.
- Evidence from students' results, lesson observations during the inspection, talking to students and looking at their books, shows that teachers do not always plan enough independent work, particularly for the more-able students. This means that they do not always make as much progress as they could because they have not developed advanced skills in, for example, background research or writing at length.
- Many teachers have adapted their teaching very well to the longer lessons introduced at the start of the current school year. They make good use of the extended time to improve students' attitudes to learning through practical activities. However, students commented and inspectors observed that in some lessons teachers do not engage students quickly enough in a variety of tasks. A minority of teachers do not always match the work they set to the needs of different groups of students.
- Not all teachers use questions to encourage students to talk about their learning and to build their confidence. However, in the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and keep testing students' knowledge and understanding, requiring them to think more deeply. For example, in one Year 11 history lesson about nineteenth-century settlers in the American West, students were encouraged to consider modern day parallels with economic migration and the seeking of asylum.
- While homework is set and marked by teachers regularly, students do not always get the opportunity to respond to the marking in their books and show their teacher how well they have understood any comments or corrections.
- Teachers also use well-trained support staff to good effect in lessons, working with a variety of different groups and individuals.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- Students' behaviour in lessons is good. They show a willingness to learn and a strong engagement with their work. They work well together in groups and pairs and are prepared to listen to each other and debate ideas and share opinions. There are strong, positive relationships

between students and staff that are focused on raising achievement.

- Students' behaviour around the school is courteous and sensible and is respectful of the environment and of others. Students want to help one another, for example older students make formal applications to be 'peer mentors' to younger students and, at the same time, learn job-seeking skills. There is a pride in their school and students were eager to share with inspectors their contributions to the design of the new building.
- Students are aware of their own safety and the safety of others both online, for example protecting their identity on the internet, and in the real world.
- The school has clear behaviour and anti-bullying policies that are fully implemented by staff. Any incidents are logged and analysed but occurrences are rare and the school is a largely harmonious and happy place for students and staff.
- The school gives physical well-being a high priority. It also runs a well-attended breakfast club that gives students a good start to their school day.
- As a result of the school's efforts in engaging with parents, attendance has improved for all groups of students, including disabled students and those who have special educational needs and students supported by the pupil premium. It is now broadly average. There have been no permanent exclusions in the last year and the proportion of fixed term exclusions has decreased significantly.
- Any students whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are very well cared for by the school. School records show that they continue to make progress in their academic work in spite of the challenges they face. This is helped by the use of the Ercall Learning Centre, a base within the school in which, when appropriate, students can build their confidence to return to mainstream lessons.
- Behaviour and safety are not yet outstanding because not all students show sufficient independence and initiative in lessons and around school, for example in managing their own safety and working independently.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The commitment and determination of the headteacher have earned him the respect of staff, parents and students. He has built a strong leadership team that includes not only a very effective deputy and dynamic assistant headteachers but also highly capable leaders of individual subjects, many being recent appointments. Together they are relentless in seeking to raise achievement and drive up the quality of teaching. They have been successful in eradicating any inadequate teaching.
- The school knows itself well and is very clear where its strengths and weaknesses lie. This is well demonstrated in the high quality of information about students' progress that is made available to all staff. This means that teachers are quick to identify any underachievement and school leaders are rigorous in ensuring that action is taken and its effects are measured.
- It is a mark of the commitment of the senior leadership that all members of the team, with the exception of the business manager, also teach. This means they are aware of the impact of school policies in the classroom and experience students' responses and concerns at first hand.

- Views from a staff questionnaire completed during the inspection indicate overwhelming support for the recent actions of school leaders in raising achievement and improving behaviour. This is echoed in responses by parents to Parent View, in which all respondents said they would not hesitate to recommend the school to other parents. Inspectors also found that the school had very robust safeguarding procedures with which both staff and students were familiar.
- Teaching is carefully monitored and there is a wide range of support provided for any identified weakness, including training. Opportunities are taken for staff to develop their professional practice, for example two teachers were recently sponsored by The Holocaust Trust to visit Auschwitz-Birkenau. They are now sharing their experiences with students. Together with the high expectations of all senior staff, this kind of commitment to the development of staff has resulted in rapid improvements in the quality of teaching.
- The school's commitment to tackling discrimination and promoting equal opportunities is particularly evident in its very successful careers programme. There is excellent use of work placements and detailed tracking of where students go when they leave school. In the last school year almost all students went on to further education, training or employment.
- The school makes good use of partnerships with other local schools and the headteacher is supported well by a local leader of education. The local authority also provides good support to the school and is knowledgeable about its strengths. It has been able to assist school leaders in successfully tackling all areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection.
- The courses that students follow have been well chosen by the school to match the needs of its students, including work-related examinations. Students are able to develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and the use of information and communication technology. This adapting of what the school provides extends to introducing the new 100 minute lessons, designed to promote active, project-based learning.
- There are many events and projects in which all students can become involved. For example, Ercall Technology College is currently one of only four schools in the country to be chosen by a world-class aeronautical engineering company to build a working plane.
- The school promotes very well the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of the students' education. This is integrated into lessons and the life of the school. Visits are organised to mosques and churches and students also have an international perspective with educational trips, for example, to Germany and to America. Visitors to the school introduce students to positive role models, such as paralympic athletes and broaden horizons through students from the school who have gone on to academic or business success.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - In the last eighteen months the governing body has considerably developed its skills and expertise through training and consultation. Governors now have a clear and realistic view of what is happening in the school and take all their statutory duties very seriously. They have a good understanding of the detailed information provided by the school and how to compare it to other similar schools. They use this information to offer a robust and constructive challenge to senior leaders, asking searching questions and requiring detailed responses. The governors are knowledgeable about strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and how increases in pay are linked to a teacher's performance. They have regular contact with teachers and an involvement in the day-to-day life of the school, including the management of teachers' performance. They know what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. The governors are financially prudent and are aware of the impact of school spending such as

the pupil premium that has improved the progress of this group of students in 2013.



## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123595
<b>Local authority</b>	Telford and Wrekin
<b>Inspection number</b>	427187

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	575
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ken Wagstaffe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chay Davis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01952 387300
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